

The Pipeline

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MHMR Commissioner Elizabeth Wachtel to Resign in June; Will Head Search for Successor

By Gil Lawson –
CHS/Communications

Elizabeth Wachtel, commissioner for the Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services for nearly five years, announced she will resign effective June 30.



"It's been a challenging and rewarding job," said Wachtel, and she commended the employees of MH/MR, saying their "dedication, hard work and caring attitude set a standard for all of state government."

Wachtel plans to return to Eastern Kentucky University, where she is a tenured faculty member of the Department of Correctional and Juvenile Justice Studies.

"Commissioner Wachtel has been a major contributor during her five years as commissioner," Cabinet for Health Services Secretary John Morse said. "She's done an excellent job of serving Kentuckians, and has been a tireless advocate for those with mental illness, mental retardation and substance abuse problems. Her desire to return to the university after five years in a very demanding, high-profile leadership job in state government is very understandable, and all of us who have had the pleasure of working with her wish her the very best in the resumption of her university career."

Wachtel's ECU career began in 1975. She holds a doctorate in social psychology from the University of Kentucky. Secretary Morse has asked her to head the search team to help find a new commissioner.

Donated Sick Leave Needed

Susie Miller, an employee of CFC's Community Based Services in Paducah, needs donated sick leave. She has been on medical leave for back surgery since January. To donate time, contact Gary Brooks at 502/572-1638.

Governor Patton Fills Top Cabinet Positions

By Margaret Harney – CFC/Communications

Gov. Paul Patton has appointed Dr. Marlene Helm as cabinet secretary for Education, Arts and Humanities, and Ronald B. McCloud as cabinet secretary for Public Protection and Regulation. The appointments were announced March 10.

Dr. Helm succeeds the late Dr. Roy Peterson. She is a graduate of Kentucky State University, and holds a master's degree and a doctorate in education from the University of Kentucky. She has held administrative positions with the school systems in Scott and Fayette counties, and is currently a visiting professor at Georgetown College. She is a resident of Nicholas County.

McCloud succeeds Laura Douglas, who resigned last month for a private sector job. Currently Chairman of the Kentucky Democratic Party and a former Ashland banker, McCloud also served as the mayor of Worthington for 15 years. He is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University.

Both Helm and McCloud will assume their new responsibilities March 15.

Emergency Procedures Update

By Margaret Harney – CFC/Communications

Kentucky's Division of Emergency Management is in the process of updating statewide emergency procedures, including procedures for tornadoes and other natural disasters, fires, and bomb threats. A group of building maintenance and safety staff from the Human Resources Building is scheduled to attend training by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) in Louisville on March 17. They will assist with the emergency procedures update.

The ATF will also conduct a forum for all employees in the Human Resources and Health Services Buildings. A date has not been set, but it will be shortly after designated building employees attend the ATF training. Complete information on the forum will be announced as soon as it is available.



Kentucky Collects Record \$198 Million in Child Support

By Kathy Adams – CFC/DCSE

Child-support collections in Kentucky exceeded \$198 million in federal fiscal year 1998, according to a report from the Cabinet for Families and Children, Division of Child Support.



Total collections rose 12.8 percent during the year ending Sept. 30, \$22 million more than the previous year, the report says. Money collected by the division goes directly to the custodial parent in non-welfare cases; in cases in which the custodial parent receives welfare, the money is used to reimburse the federal and state governments for the welfare payments they made.

Non-welfare collections have increased by 41.8 percent over the last three years, more than \$60 million. Welfare collections over the same period have remained constant despite a 29.2 percent drop in the welfare caseload. The division recovered 27.8 percent of the regular welfare benefits paid to families through child support collections during federal fiscal year 1998.

Improvements in Kentucky's New-Hire Reporting Program resulted in an 24.3 percent increase in the number of new hires reported in 1998; 42,462 child-support cases were matched with the 406,142 newly hired employees reported in 1998. New-hire reporting by employers provides a critical link both in locating non-custodial parents and in withholding child-support payments from their wages. Wage withholding continues to be the most effective child-support collection method.

Kentucky families and children are not the only ones benefiting from increased child-support collections; taxpayers benefit as well. Families receiving child-support are less likely to require public assistance.

Welfare reform provides for many improvements in the child-support program to aid states in the collection and enforcement of child-support obligations, which ultimately will enable more families to move off welfare.

According to Division Director Steve Veno, receiving child-support is critical for many families if they are to achieve self-sufficiency. With new collection and enforcement tools still in the early stages of implementation, Veno sees dramatic improvements in the child-support program in the very near future. "Armed with sophisticated tracking systems, improved technology and new enforcement tools, parents will find it harder to shirk their fundamental responsibility to financially support their children," said Veno.

VISION 2000 Wants You

By Sherry Fulton – CFC/OTS

Do you want to know what is going on in the Cabinet? Do you want to make a difference? Do you want to improve morale, customer service and working conditions within the Cabinet? Are you willing to work?

If your answer is yes, then join us at the next Vision 2000 Committee Meeting on Wednesday, March 24, in the CHR cafeteria at 8:30 am. We are trying to make a difference.



Central Office

Notes and Activities

- ◆ The **aerobics program** meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 5 p.m. in the cafeteria. Call Beth Bates at 564-7736 for more information.
- ◆ The annual **March of Dimes** fundraiser, **Walk America**, will be held April 16 for state employees. Plan now to participate.
- ◆ Reminder: the **elevators should be vacated** during **emergency evacuations**, except for those employees or visitors with disabilities. Everyone possible should use the escalators and stairs.
- ◆ CFC is collecting recipes for a cookbook that will be sold to raise funds for the 1999 **Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign**. Submit your favorite recipes to Peggy Burch of Technology Services at CHR 5E-B. You may also send them to her by e-mail or fax them to 564-0693. For more information, call Peggy Burch at 564-6478, ext. 3341.
- ◆ **Nominations Families and Children's Employees of the Month for March are due March 15.** Two outstanding employees are selected each month - one from staff working in the Human Resources Building and one from staff at First City. For more information, or to submit a nomination, contact Charlene Nation of the Employee Services Branch, CHR-5, phone 564-7770. She will also accept nominations sent by e-mail.

Pipeline, a weekly newsletter for employees of the Cabinets for Families and Children and Health Services, welcomes reader comments and contributions. Items for *Pipeline* are due by 4:30 p.m. Tuesday; items for intercom announcements are due by 4:30 p.m. Monday. Call (502) 564-6786 or send information to Patricia Loman at Patricia.Boler@mail.state.ky.us.